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NOTES

All the theatre's a stage for wild child Jamie Cullum

TAKES THE SHOW INTO THE AISLES

And there's no rest for the Bad Plus

Monday

British boy wonder **Jamie Cullum** played up his wild-child of jazz image with a raucous, sold-out performance at Théâtre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts, and his disciples couldn't get enough of it, pelting the stage with a pair of panties and a giant soccer flag.

"I love Montreal – you really seem to encourage bad behaviour," said Cullum, leaping off the grand piano and hopping across the stage like the Energizer bunny in a rollicking three-hour set that had grrrls in tank tops and fritzzzy cags swaying to the rhythm, illuminated cellphones hoisted in the air like candles at a rock concert.

But get past the showbiz antics and the beer bottle Cullum is an infectiously likeable entertainer and an extraordinary and inventive musical talent, sprawling from piano to percussion, from guitar and horn to Ella-inspired bebop, from Gershwin and Cole Porter to Doves, the White Stripes and his own eclectic pop-infused jazz.

Late in the evening, Cullum and bass player **Geoff Gascoyne** left the stage, encouraging audience members to gather around. Cullum wandered through the aisles, using the hall as an echo chamber, for a chilling rendition of Nature Boy that Nat King Cole himself would surely have dubbed unforgettable.

PEGGY CURRAN

It was well past midnight, but the crowd at the Gesù wouldn't let **the Bad Plus** off the stage. It took three encores before the threat of a mini-riot subsided. And why not? Any group that can follow an Ornette Coleman cover with a Burt Bacharach one – This Guy's in Love with You, played with cheeky subversion but overwhelming tenderness – deserves the ovation. As usual, initiates were turned into instant fanatics when they heard the trio, which brings musical wit and rock-like aggression with its stunning virtuosity. Pianist **Ethan Iverson's** cascading notes, **Reid Anderson's** furious bass and force-of-nature **Dave King's** unearthly drumming locked into each other like a jigsaw puzzle in this warm, humorous and gripping performance. And the crescendos just kept on comin'.

BERNARD PERUSSE

Tomorrow

Jean-Michel Pilc, the incandescent pianist from Paris playing solo at Chapelle Historique du Bon Pasteur tomorrow, has been living in New York since 1994. "I'm not a man of many expectations; in general, I think more by instinct," he said. "I like to keep fresh and learn new things. I knew I had to go to New York sometime in my life, but I discovered I preferred living there than in Paris. It's like falling in love with another woman. Not everything is rational in life."

Getting solo bookings isn't easy, particularly in clubs, he said, but his first solo album, Follow Me (2004), has helped. "Every concert is a totally different experience for me; whether solo or trio, it's like the first concert in my life," he said. "In a trio, I not only play solo but (there is) also bass and drums. So playing solo piano is like being in a different band with my brain, a one-man band. What interests me is the music. There are so many people playing their instruments, but not making music. Once I start playing the first note, I don't even know where I am. Planet Earth becomes Planet Music."

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

Continuing

You might think this was the FrancoFolies for all the Québécois pop music stars attending the festival. **Dumas** was decked in spiffy black to see Friday's midnight Club Soda show by **Plaster**, electronica mavens with a comic touch (two-thirds of whom play in his band). Sunday's sudden outbreak of sun illuminated avant-pop hero **Pierre Lapointe, Philippe B.** and crew as they cavorted, literally, through the Ste. Catherine St. throng, pressing palms along the way. Upstairs at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, members of **Les Trois Accords** welcomed new Indica labelmates **the Cat Empire**, Aussies who hit pay dirt with mix-and-match party music like the Quebecers. And of course, Tuesday night's Paul Simon tribute was loaded with "chez nous" contributions by the likes of regular festivalgoers **Michel Rivard** and **Ariane Moffatt**.

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

Best Buy has lived up to its name, taking over the site's CD kiosks after Archambault so cravenly ripped off festivalgoers in the past. Quebec's leading disquaire was almost criminal when impulse buying is considered, and negligent when you think that, for many, the festival kiosk is their first introduction to a jazz boutique. Many of the same records Archambault sells across the street at Place des Arts are between $2 to $5 cheaper at the fest. (The fascinating three-CD box set The House That Trane Built: The Best of Impulse Records sells for $39.99 at Best Buy, $20 less.) HMV is also competitive on some festival product, and its two-for-$25 series offers the best deals on selected catalogue classics (Getz, Coltrane, Miles).

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

PHIL CARPENTER THE GAZETTE

Ariane Moffatt and Michel Rivard perform at the Montreal International Jazz Festival's tribute to Paul Simon on Tuesday night on the General Motors stage.

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